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# the COLLECTOR

A Current Record of Art, Bibliography, Antiquarianism, Etc.

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## NOTES FOR THE NEW YEAR

AN artist argued with me the other day to the effect that the press had no more right to criticise a picture adversely than a carpet or a piece of furniture. When I asked him if he put himself on the commercial level of the carpet manufacturer and the cabinetmaker, he was, of course, insulted. As a matter of fact, the tradesman who sells adulterated and worthless wares is criticised quite as severely as any other person who obtains money under false pretences. If his commodities are poor, the public soon discover it, and soon cease to patronize him. But the public who do not know enough of pictures to discriminate between good and bad demand enlightenment from those who possess the knowledge they lack. If criticism is good enough to be of use to art, it is good enough to be of use to the public, too, for it can best serve art by convincing the public who support art, by its disinterestedness, that when it praises its praise is deserved. I remember a few years ago that a young painter here copied some pictures by a local artist which were sold as originals. When the newspapers dished the fraud up, it was devoured as a dainty in the studios. The poor painter got no compassion from his confrères for an error necessity forced him to and inexperience did not warn him off from. Now, suppose so the newspaper critic had discovered that these pictures were forgeries before anyone else did. Would he have done his duty by the public to have kept his own counsel and permitted the fraud to run its course?

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I do not believe in those impeccable gentlemen who stroll around a gallery denouncing this, that and t'other as fraudulent and false at a glance. I never met one of them who could satisfy me that he had any greater proofs than his own conceit to support him. To detect a forgery in art a man must be more than a casual critic, and he will not make his decisions off-hand like a criticism of a comic song. The most expert of experts is fallible anyhow, and when pictures were turned out as, for instance, the French painters of the 1830 school turned them out, by contract, so to speak, the bad with the good, the worthless with the gems, all given currency by the magic of a famous name, it becomes a matter of impossibility to render a decision except in cases of the most flagrantly apparent fraud. I know a great many canvases of this imprint that I would not hang on my wall as gifts, but I do not take it upon myself to say that these latter are counterfeits, even did I think so. It is sufficient for me that they are artistically worthless, and but for the painters' names would not sell for the value of average native work in a public sale. There are pictures by Corot, Diaz, Rousseau, etc., in many collections which show how well these great men could paint when they chose. But the greatest men have done, and will ever do, work unworthy of them—experiments which they are not satisfied with themselves, sketches made as memoranda and left as such. The artist dies. His accumulations are sold. And the next thing we know they are put upon the market. There is only one point about a great deal of this posthumous rubbish that is really suspicious—this is that so much of it is signed. Artists do not make a practice of signing their sketches or their incomplete works. Who, then, signs them? The mere fact that they are signed would go far to show that their market merit is extrinsic, and dependent on the name of the artist rather than the quality of his art. If a work of art sells on its merits, the question of authorship is of no consequence, and our doubts do not lessen the selling value of the picture. If the name of the painter creates the value, then it is like a note of

hand, and we have the right, the purchaser for himself, and the journalist for the public, to throw any reasonable doubt on an unsatisfactory pedigree. The business of the dealer is to make that pedigree complete. He has no right to assume infallibility for his or any other person's opinion. The duty of an honest critic is to point out any flaw in that pedigree. To assume that his doing so is a libellous and malicious is to attack all freedom of criticism, and leave the uneducated public in the hands of the dealers, not the honorable ones, but those who flood the markets with forgeries. There are only two ways of assuring the commercial value of a work of art—by the internal evidence, which shows that it must have been painted by its reputed author, or, in default of this, by the reputed author's acknowledgement of it; and this must be shown by evidence which would be good in law. Unless the public maintain these rules of evidence, we are in danger of seeing our market flooded with clever forgeries, and it is the legitimate right and duty of every critic to insist on protecting the public by calling attention to the lack of such evidence, as it is the business of every honest dealer to furnish it.

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The press extends to those who deal in pictures and to those who make them, privileges such as no other tradesmen or producers enjoy. On the plea that they are popular educators and advancers of civilization and intelligence they receive a protection and encouragement which impose special obligations on them in return. In plain English, if they want the support of the press they must deserve it, and they cannot deserve it by demanding commendation for everything they give out, irrespective of its title to a free and favorable advertisement.

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Two seasons ago there was an auction sale in this city of a lot of pictures belonging to a catchpenny collector in the wholesale dry-goods district. Among the canvases was a scene of camp life, signed Georges Hyon and catalogued as such. A gentleman well known for his judgment and extensive experience as a collector happened to see this work before the exhibition opened, and to his amazement recognized it as a copy of a picture by Berne-Bellecour that belonged to him and was then in a safe deposit vault scarcely a mile away. He naturally represented this fact to the owner of the collection. There was clearly but one thing for the latter to do—to remove the picture from the sale. He begged the owner of the genuine picture to preserve the matter a secret, so that the sale of the remainder of the collection might not be injured by a public scandal being attached to it. The latter consented, with the understanding that the dry-goods man would remove the forgery and not offer it for sale. The dry-goods man promised anything for peace and quietness, and having secured them, broke his word, sent the forgery to the block and swindled some buyer out of several hundred dollars. A more cold-blooded or deliberate act of rascality I never encountered, even in the auction rooms of New York, so rich in rascalities. The "collector" in this case was a business man, with a comprehension of business principles. He had warning and proof that he was offering a counterfeit article for sale, but he sold it all the same and pocketed the money it brought like a sneak thief or a footpad to whom any chance victim is fair prey. I wonder whether he conducts the business of his house on the same basis.

This forged picture had been purchased by the person in question at one of the dirty auction-rooms downtown that cloak their swindles under a municipal license. It was one of many of its kind. Sales stuffed with such forgeries are constant here throughout the season. Only fools who believe that they can buy art at ninety per cent discount are deceived by them—but the crop of fools is incessantly renewed. The traffic in these forgeries is a scandal on the picture trade. Every decent dealer suffers by it. The factory goes on all the year round. It is only a question of copying something—or of painting over a solar-print on canvas, or a photogravure or engraving. The frame and the auctioneer do the rest with the cheap job-lot collectors of New York to help them out. Within a month there was a picture sale in this city simply incredible in its thievish audacity. It was a long line of forgeries of well-known and often famous names. It was extensively advertised. The licensed auctioneer endorsed it. The pictures belonged to a knavish foreigner who runs his artistic bunco-game in the respectable neighborhood of Madison Square. Formerly, I believe, this rogue had his forgeries painted in Paris, where he has an artistic connection. I am told that he now has them executed here, and so saves himself the duty at the Custom House. He even grudges the country the small tax it levies on his swindle. Instead of importing his forgeries he imports his compatriots to execute them. They grind the mill around the corner from Fifth avenue, instead of in the garrets of Montmartre and the Batignolles. Nor are his frauds confined to New York. They are spread by his agents over the whole country, and especially in the west, where whole cargoes of counterfeit art are unloaded at job-lot prices. The last time I was in Chicago, I heard a big Board of Trade man pricing pictures in a gallery. "Four thousand dollars for that Diaz!" he exclaimed, "why; I bought one from Soandso last week for \$400, and it was twice the size."

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Against such despicable swindlers as this no honest dealer can successfully contend. No picture dealer in New York who has any reputation can afford to trifle with it. It would be absolute madness for him to deal in suspicious wares, even were he degraded enough to do so. But here comes a fellow with a car-load of fraud and a front of brass, crying his wares like a traveling quack, and swearing by them, with oaths as long as his honesty is short. No matter at what price he sells he earns a profit. The most expensive feature of his stock is the frames. It seems incredible that people with brains enough to make money should have so little brains as to waste any part of it on such an impostor. Perhaps they would not if we had more intelligent art criticism in this country, and they were intelligent enough to read it.

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One of these cheap jack art peddlers who has recently got into trouble, is very well known in the Western country from several years' experience during which he has been operating there. His policy appears to have been to carry some genuine and decent pictures as a bait or decoy for others. Unfortunately for himself, he appears to have undertaken to get ahead of the Custom House by not even paying duty on the legitimate portions of his stock. To quote from the very clear and comprehensive report in the *Tribune* of this city, at the middle of last month, a Treasury Department inspector, Major Traitteur, who had been to Chicago, Minneapolis and other cities tracing paintings which had been smuggled into this country, returned to New York and reported to Collector Hendricks the result of his journey. He found that of the original collection of forty paintings which he had been sent to follow up, many had been sold to rich Milwaukee and St. Louis brewers. Collector Hendricks next day received a letter from Assistant Secretary Spalding, of the Treasury Department, containing a statement made by one "Colonel" August Gross, that the seizure by Major Traitteur of a picture by J. L. Gérôme, "The Lion in Ambush," and of one by Grolleron, "Aux Armes," for undervaluation, was an injustice, this "Colonel" Gross claiming that he had paid duties upon them amounting to \$440.10. He added that they were imported on October 16 on *La Bretagne*, of the French line of steamships. The records of the Custom House showed that "Colonel" Gross, from whom the paintings were seized, imported on that date six cheap paintings and paid the amount of duties named. The "Lion in Ambush" sold for 28,000 francs in Paris, however, and "Aux Armes" sold for 10,000 francs. The duties on the first picture would amount to about \$900, and on the second painting to about \$400. These paintings the Custom House officials say, were brought over by Spiridon, the art dealer, on August 16 on *La Bretagne*. "Colonel" Gross on that day made application for a pass to go down the Bay on one of the revenue cutters, but he did not reach the Barge Office in time to take the

boat, and he afterward met Spiridon at the steamer's wharf. "Colonel" Gross now is credited with saying that the two paintings which have been seized were sold in France to Marquis Kaltaraza, who was coming to this country to take a place in the Italian Legation at Washington. There is such an Italian Marquis, but he is not in Washington, and it is said that he never has been there. Of course Mr. Spiridon indignantly denies all connection with the matter. As for "Colonel" Gross, who is a French citizen and derives his military title from being Colonel of the Fifty-fifth New York Regiment, he is credited with a "pull" in Washington, and so the upshot of the case would be difficult to predict. If our picture dealers are really earnest in their expressed desire to protect themselves, however, it is more than likely that the predacious claws of the "Colonel" and of his friend Mr. Spiridon will be clipped for some time to come.

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Wherever such a fellow goes he leaves a dirty trail. One after another he has used up the eastern cities so that each season finds him further westward. Not only does he prey upon the public on his own account, but he spoils the market for others. A couple of years back, for example, Pittsburgh was a fine art market. A rich and cultured city, just going in for art, she afforded honest dealers an opportunity well worth advantaging by. The buzzard drummer scented the feast and swooped down upon it, with his job-lot fine arts and his cut price-list. Ask any dealer what sort of a market Pittsburgh is to-day. The most knowing collectors there now come to New York to buy. The others do not buy any more. The big cities in the interior of New York state tell the same tale, and it is repeated in Washington and in Chicago. There is one case in the latter city, in which a batch of pictures was sold for about \$30,000 to a newly-made collector by rule of cash. If these pictures had been genuine, in the size and of the quality claimed for them, they could not have been bought at even a Seney auction for less than double the money, and would have sold at private sale right here in New York for three times as much. Yet the buyer congratulates himself on his bargain.

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I find the following in *The Morning Herald*, of Rochester, N. Y.

The editor of the COLLECTOR says: "On five different occasions this summer, subscribers to this paper have submitted to me for examination, pictures purporting to be the production of famous French brushes. These works have always been handsomely framed and carefully enclosed in shadow-boxes with glass. They were signed in full, with fair imitations of the familiar signatures of the artists, but in each case the work was so unquestionably fraudulent that any serious consideration of it would have been preposterous. Every one of these works had been sold with a guarantee of authenticity by a picture pedler who operates out of town but who has his office down town in this city. Perhaps the location of his office may account for the liberties he takes with the confidence of the public. Only the confidence of professional consultation and the reluctance of my subscribers to figure in the role of victims, prevent me from pillorying this rascal as he deserves. It seems to me, however, that persons swindled by such knaves, owe the exposure of the swindler to the public as a duty to the common good." This same traveling merchant, or his twin brother, is known in Rochester. He has not only been here, but he has found customers for his fraudulent paintings.

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On Broadway, opposite Great Jones street, a vacant store bloomed into kaleidoscopic splendor the other day with a collection of what a sign daubed in ink on a sheet of brown paper in each window described as "Guaranteed Genuine Oil Paintings." From the fact that the chief of the canvases bore the illustrious name of Rubens it may be inferred that the collection was no common one. Indeed, it is fortunate for the public that it was not. Many such exhibitions would be too much even for the stomach of the average seeker after bargains in art. Even Mr. Wardle's fat boy was susceptible to the cloying qualities of too much richness. Happening to pass that way, and noting that a sale was in progress, I dropped in to see how art was getting on at the hands of the sordid and unappreciative American public. An audience of a dozen malodorous small boys, who were either smoking cigarettes or chewing tobacco, a person of a vagabond aspect, who was asleep on the window seat, several knowing gentlemen, with their hands in their pockets, and a stout man with a shiny hat and a big watch chain, stood behind a row of four chairs, which in their turn stood in front of the picture stand. In the chairs sat a well-dressed, weak-looking man, of a rural aspect, and a lady sufficiently like him to pass for his wife. The auctioneer stood on a kitchen chair, with his overcoat on. The background, seen through a curtain of dirty canvas, consisted of the rear of the store, in which the fine arts, each in its shadow-box of pine daubed

over with brown paint, were piled up like cases of window glass or sheet tin. A colored man, with one eye, and an Irishman, with two black eyes, each with a dirty white cotton glove on, to save an extra pair, handled the fine arts as if they were scuttles of coal, and smiled whenever one was sold.

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A blood-curdling landscape, apparently designed to represent a winter sunset, was put on the stand—upside down at first, an error which was promptly corrected at the command of the stout man with the shiny hat, who was evidently a connoisseur.

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"There you have the finest picture in our collection," said the auctioneer, in a voice like the scraping of a boiler plate, "I'd give fifty dollars for it myself. Yes, fifty dollars, if I didn't have my house full by the same artist already. It's a European picture, ladies and gentlemen, guaranteed a genuine oil painting." Here he leaped down, sprang upon the picture like a tiger, and dealt it a blow with his fist that made it resound like a drum. "There you are. It's not even dented. Step right up, sir," to the meek man from the back counties. "Feel it all you like, you can't rub it off."

The meek man rubbed the canvas timidly, and after looking at his fingers held them out to his wife, who nodded and smiled. Meanwhile the stout man with the watch chain asked the auctioneer:

"What do you want for that picture?"

"That?" said the auctioneer, cocking his eye at a canvas which apparently represented a flock of quail struck by a cyclone. "That little beauty, sir, you can have at private sale, sir, for fifty dollars, sir."

"Fifty dollars!" repeated the stout man with agitation. "You don't mean it?"

"The artist's wife died last night," responded the auctioneer, in a hoarse whisper, and dashing an imaginary tear from his eye, "and he must raise money to bury her."

"Poor devil," murmured the stout man in sympathetic accents, "you don't say so? What a terrible sacrifice!"

And he pulled out a roll that palpably consisted of some bank-bills rolled round a section of lead-pipe, and counted out several of the bills, while the auctioneer knocked down the winter landscape to the party from St. Lawrence county at a bargain, and with tears in his eyes, for \$14.

The Rubens had not been sold when I left, but the rural investor, who had so far picked up a fair truck-load, was still there, and, no doubt, he got it at a bargain also.

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It is funny how circumstances alter cases. When this sort of thing occurs on Broadway or the Bowery under such auspices, it is called swindling, and given a place among our statutory misdemeanors if not actual felonies. But when it happens in the vicinity of Wall street, it is art auctioneering.

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My remarks upon the impressionists in the last issue of this paper have elicited a diversity of opinions. A few genteel and well-bred artists and a couple of dilettante cranks have written to politely inform me, to quote some of their own terms, that I am a "dirty liar," a "low, ignorant blackguard," a "brainless ass" and so on. In the majority of cases, however, the correspondence is of a less violently complimentary character, and assures me that the majority of my readers accept my opinion if they do not endorse it. Meanwhile, the fact remains, as I have stated it, that these chromatic charlatans prove themselves humbugs by their own works. A couple of years ago, the most brutal daubs of Monet were offered for sale as master-works, and quite a number of them were sold. Now Monet himself is modifying his brutality, and showing in his most recent productions an approximation to what he can do if he chooses. But the worthless daubs which are yet in stock must be worked off on somebody, and the couple of dealers who trade in them must keep the old cry up. When a shopkeeper has a stock of canvases stacked up like a carload of shingles, it is quite natural that he should desire to realize on them, even if their first cost represents an expenditure by him of only a couple of hundred francs apiece.

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History is only repeating itself in this matter. Some twenty-five years ago, there was sprung on us the impressionism of Courbet, and in due time it died a natural death. Then we had the impressionism of Whistler in England, and of Manet in France. They ceased to be sensations long ago. Ten years since the impressionism of Munich was a season's wonder at our picture shows. Who

remembers Mr. Currier and his followers in the bog of dirty paint? Now it is the fin de siècle Frenchmen, who are practically dead cocks in the pit already. Meanwhile the art which each clan has decried in turn goes steadily on and up, and acquires greater dignity and splendor by the contrast of ineffectual sensationalism.

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A very beautiful picture by Cazin, called "Route en Flandre," is to be seen in the Delmonico galleries. It is, I believe, one of the two notable pictures by this artist which were shown in the Champs de Mars Salon, the other of which was described in the last issue of this paper upon its exhibition by Knoedler & Co., and which belongs to Mr. Yerkes of Chicago. It is in the contemplation of such canvases as this, so close to nature in sympathy and in simple but effective translation of their subject, that the tawdry affectations of the Monet school of artistic humbuggery become most truly ridiculous.

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A sale of works by the able and original marine and landscape painter, F. K. M. Rehn, will follow that which is to be made by Mr. J. G. Brown, at the Ortgies Galleries next month.

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My predictions for the auction of the late J. B. Jongkind's pictures in Paris have been verified. The sale, which took place December 7 and 8, produced 286,950 francs, less than 200 oils and water-colors being sold. In the case of most of the finer works private collectors outbid the dealers. M. Lutz, a Parisian amateur, paid 27,650 francs, the highest price offered at the sale, for "La Meuse aux Environs de Rotterdam," an upright canvas which, even in the aquatint reproduction in the catalogue, declares itself a remarkable work. The "Canal en Hollande" brought 16,500 francs.

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An amateur of the true fire passed away last month with Mr. Henry C. Gibson, of Philadelphia. His collection, though neither the most extensive in the country nor the most ostentatiously advertised, was one of choice. It was quite well known from the owner's practice of opening his gallery to the public for useful and beneficent purposes at certain seasons. An excellent description of it was given in the *Art Amateur* last year. Mr. Gibson had not been active as a picture buyer for some years before his death. He devoted himself rather to refining his collection than enlarging it. Natural taste, accurate judgment and liberality, combined to identify his gallery with himself. To speak of him personally is to speak of a man of rare qualities. He must have left a large fortune. He was the son and successor of John Gibson, who in his day distilled the finest whisky east of Kentucky. The firm of John Gibson's Sons & Co. was one of the finest old business establishments in Philadelphia. I have sampled whisky in their offices down in Dock street that would have made the gods renounce nectar. But I am compounding a sort of silly cocktail of art and alcohol. It is because I never could disassociate this amiable gentleman from his love of the beautiful, and I shall always remember him for the dignity he gave his public position as a manufacturer, merchant and financier, and for the geniality with which he, when occasion served, played the host as well as the Mæcenæ. He represented a race of Americans whom Time removes without providing us with their substitutes.

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On the death of his father in 1865, Mr. Gibson succeeded to the control of the business, and inherited a fortune of over \$2,000,000. He associated with him Andrew M. Moore and Joseph F. Sinnott, under the name of John Gibson's Son & Co. After Mr. Gibson retired the firm became Moore & Sinnott. After his retirement, Mr. Gibson became extensively interested as a capitalist in various enterprises. He was a shrewd investor and an active promoter of financial and other business organizations. He was a director and large stockholder of the First National Bank, of Philadelphia, in whose building he had his private office. He was vice-president of the Investment Company, of Philadelphia, and of the Investment Trust Company, and a director of the Fidelity Trust Company, the Real Estate Trust Company, the Philadelphia Warehousing Company and the Teutonia Fire Insurance Company. He was active for several years in the Reading Railroad management, being one of the board of managers and later one of the voting trust. He was a large benefactor of the University of Pennsylvania, having contributed many thousands of dollars to it, in addition to endowing the Gibson Wing of the University Hospital. Among his other benefactions were large gifts to the building of the Academy of Fine Arts and Pennsylvania Museum. He was a liberal giver to charity. Mr. Gibson had two very fine residences: the one in which he died, on Walnut street, and in which he lived for twenty years, and the other at Wynnewood, on

the Pennsylvania Railroad. This quaint mansion, built in the unique style of mediæval architecture, was completed in 1883, and is known as "Maybrook." This and the residence of Joseph F. Sinnott, above Rosemont, recently completed, are regarded as the most costly suburban houses on the line of the Pennsylvania Railroad. In the Gibson collection are examples, always of the highest quality, of Corot, Daubigny, Jules Breton, Dupre, Millet, Rousseau, Diaz, Van Marcke, Meissonier, Fortuny, Zamacois, Munkacsy, Rosa Bonheur, Gérôme, Isabey, Roybet, Detaille, Schreyer, Couture, Andreas Achenbach, Henner, Fromentin, De Neuville, Jacque, Rossi, Goubie, Rico, Madrazo, Tissot, Vibert, Cazin, Troyon, and of some American artists, including Gilbert Stuart, Thomas Sully and Peter Rothermel.

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The statements of Verestchagin that the sale of "L'Angelus" to the American Art Association, and its re-sale to M. Chauchard, were bogus transactions, are the ravings of a lunatic. They arise, probably, out of the fact that there was some sort of a growl between Verestchagin and Mr. Sutton, the head of the Art Association, during the painter's stay in this country, and out of the painter's wrathful disappointment over the result of the sale of his pictures. Verestchagin confidently expected to pouch from a million to a million and a half of francs out of the sale, and the result of the auction must have set him frantic. As to "The Angelus," I am personally conversant with the circumstances of the sale, have examined and handled the correspondence and papers, and on one occasion translated portions of some of them. The picture was bought, for cash, and that it was sold to M. Chauchard for cash is equally certain. The intermediary in the latter transaction was M. Henri Garnier, who, at 4 Rue de Mogador, publishes a well known art journal and conducts a prosperous business for the amiable interchange of works of art, between principals. It is M. Garnier who has acted as adviser in the purchase of most if not all of the masterpieces with which M. Chauchard is building up one of the greatest private collections in the world, and the business of purchasing "The Angelus," begun by him with the Art Association's Paris agent, Montaignac, was concluded by Mr. Robertson, of the Association, who carried the picture to Paris and delivered it himself.

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From time to time, the exhibition in this country has been talked of, of the Doré Gallery, for so many years a popular art-show of Bond street in London. The singular popularity, of the exhibition kept up, however, and while it continued to pay, the removal was deferred. Latterly, however, it has commenced to fall off in its returns, and the American project comes up for more serious discussion than ever. In all likelihood, the gallery will be transferred to our shores by the opening of the next winter season.

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The evening of December 26 witnessed the formal organization of the Brooklyn Numismatical Society, at the Young Men's Christian Association Building in that city. About forty persons were present at the meeting. The new society will form a section of the Brooklyn Institute, and will collect coins and medals, a library on numismatics and conduct courses of lectures on the subject. Dr. Charles E. West delivered a lecture on "Ancient Coinage," illustrated by lantern slides, of the coins of all the ancient world. The society organized by the election of: President, Henry D. Morgan, of New York; secretary, Alexander Balmanno; executive committee, the president and secretary, and Dr. Lysander Dickeman, A. Feuerardent, Charles Gregory, John Bliss, Dr. Charles E. West, W. H. Allee, M. J. Bradley and George N. Olcott.

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The blast was blustrous and bitter in its biting breath the other evening when I came out of the hospitable mansion of Mr. Andrew C. Zabriskie, to which I had been invited to meet the gentlemen of the Numismatic and Antiquarian Society of this city, at the reading, by Mr. Zabriskie, of a paper of great interest and historical importance. Mr. Zabriskie is one of the most enthusiastic and accomplished numismatists in the country, and one of those, too, who are doing such good work in advancing the cause among us. A special department of his collection is made up of medalllic memorials of Abraham Lincoln, which number between 300 and 400, and constitute the largest collection on the subject in existence. They run the gamut from exquisite designs in the precious metals to the cheap, popular tokens of copper and tin, and have provided their possessor with material for an essay which he calls "Medalllic Memorials of Abraham Lincoln," and which he illustrated by photographs thrown upon a screen, as well as by the collection itself in its special cabinet. Among prominent numismatists who attended the reading, at 12 East Thirtieth

street, were Messrs. Daniel Parish, Jr., Robert Hewitt, William Poillon, Commodore Charles Pryer, Charles H. Wright, Capt. A. T. Francis, Henry Russell Drowne, Dr. F. E. Hyde, Gerard Beekman, Woodbury G. Langdon, Dr. Frank Abbott, Col. Frederick Kopper, the Rev. D. M. Hunter, Herbert Valentine, Dr. L. A. Walker, Isaac N. Seligman, W. A. Paepke, Bauman L. Belden, Dr. Joseph Wiener, S. R. Trevett, Calvin Tomkins, the Rev. Dr. Arthur Brooks, S. H. Valentine, A. W. Kelley, J. H. B. Edgar, Dr. J. Haven Emerson, P. H. Barhydt, Col. J. A. Denison, S. P. Avery, Jr., Dr. R. H. Sayre, John A. C. Gray, James E. Ware, T. Whittaker, Capt. Clinton H. Smith, J. C. Nicoll, E. D. Hewitt, W. A. Wilson, Dr. D. B. St. John Roosa and Col. E. M. Crawford.

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Of Mr. Zabriskie's paper itself, it may be briefly said that it is a masterly and exhaustive investigation of its subject. Its author divides the Lincoln medals into three general classes: those struck off during the political campaign of 1860, those of the campaign of 1864, and those made in honor of the great War President's memory. The first series show a numerous array of the rail-splitter medals, many of which have a decidedly grotesque character in conception and design. The last exhibit the more dignified and noble sentiment of veneration for the genius and greatness of Lincoln, and of grief at his tragic death. Among them were shown the medal struck off by the American Numismatic and Archæological Society after Lincoln's death, and the one that was presented to Mrs. Lincoln by 40,000 French people. A committee in France, Mr. Zabriskie said, desired to make this medal to be presented to Mrs. Lincoln to show their admiration for her husband. No one was allowed to contribute more than two cents. Napoleon III opposed the project, and even refused to allow appeals for contributions to be published, and also refused to allow the die to be made in France, and it was made in Switzerland and struck off there. Between these extremes are a vast variety of designs, which completely sustain the interest of the subject, and whose study and analysis provide an important chapter in the personal history of that period fraught with important events.

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It is by such occasions as this that the American Numismatic and Antiquarian Society shows that it has set its shoulders sturdily to the wheel, and the attention of the public cannot be too earnestly or persistently directed to the work it has in hand. We apply the term science to numismatics, but it is, in effect, one of the very few reliable records, and the only art reliable as a record, of the history of the world. But for it the histories of many vanished nations would have perished utterly. After their cities and their temples had crumbled to desert dust and been blown broadcast by the blasts of centuries, their coinage remained to us—fragmentary, perhaps, and in broken sequence—but at any rate in such substance that by it their dissipated chronicles could be traced out and defined. These precious fragments of metal, often so base of quality and rude of execution as to provoke the ignorant and thoughtless to a smile, antedate written history by centuries, and replace those scanty written records of which only dim legends remain to us. Buried in graves, lost in the streets of cities themselves lost, scattered in wildernesses that were once populous and powerful with human life, these little memorials of what was once, may well serve to remind us of what some day may be. It is for the reason that it reveals to us so much that would otherwise be hidden and unknown, that numismatics, call it science or what you will, has taken its foremost place in the appreciation of thoughtful and investigatory men.

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I have not spoken of the artistic side of numismatics. When we come to this we arrive at some of the most noble, dignified and perfect masterpieces of miniature sculpture known—some of them so wonderful in their perfection of execution and their force of expressiveness that they have no superiors and but very few rivals in the most magnificent works of grand sculpture in any age. The eye of criticism has discovered in some of the battered and corroded pieces of the vanished nations models of artistic grace and power. Thus we can really follow the art of the world in its mintages as well as its history. One great and valuable consequence of this is that every boy and girl who commences to form a collection of coins commences to learn art by doing so. All numismatists—by which term one may define the difference between students of coins and mere collectors of them—are men and women of artistic spirit. They could not help being so, for they could not study their collections without insensibly experiencing the subtle spell which they diffuse. I have seen cabinets of coins which feasted my eyes like galleries of pictures, and whose charm stole upon my senses like the perfume of a summer garden. I



spent an hour of my busiest day lately with my friend Professor Frossard, studying a superb broad gold piece which he had secured for a client, and I could sketch you that royal coin to-day, or ten years hence, so indelibly did its masterwork of design imprint itself upon my memory. How many sculptors have we to-day whose most pretentious works we remember much of once we have studied, admired and passed them by?

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I have an old friend who, after following the sea for many years, settled in gray and honored age to enjoy the comfort he had wrested from the grasp of constant peril. He is a bachelor. He found one day a little crippled boy in the street—a mere caricature of neglected childhood, whimpering like a freezing kitten in a doorway. He took him in his arms and brought him home. The doctors told him the child was a hopeless idiot, who had doubtless been abandoned by his miserable parents, and were best sent to a public institution. The old skipper's two old tom-cats had fawned on the child, and perhaps he received this as a good omen for the forlorn outcast, for his cats are wise cats, that have sailed the sounding seas with him around the world. He said he would keep the boy, and he has kept him. I can remember how Captain Bob and I used to sit over our grog and our black Havanas, that I sadly fear paid no customs' duty, of an evening, and watch this distorted human animal roll in sportive communion with the big, tiger-limbed brutes upon the floor. They played with him with paws of velvet. One might have imagined that these worldly-wise brutes of the quarterdeck recognized in this poor, rickety waif of the gutter, albeit of a superior race, one less capable of self-help than themselves. Anyhow, a couple of Christmases ago I happened to be in the old sea-town where the captain rides easily at his last anchorage, and I took with me an old silver tobacco-stopper that I had picked up as a little memorial for him of our own grogs and salt-horse under the line. I had also in my pocket an old florin piece, which some one had given me for a half dollar in change, and which, as it was a beautiful stamp, I had given a wash of ammonia to get a better look at it. The white shine of the silver caught the crippled urchin's eye, and he crawled to look at it—for he will never know the use of feet. "Damme!" cried the captain, "if he don't seem to know what it is!"

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The puny fellow had no idea of its value as money, but he turned it over and over again, looked at it, traced the lines of its relief with curious fingers, showed it to the old tom-cats, his playmates, and in his imperfect speech and manner testified that there was something about it which had appealed to the latent sensibility of a mind stunted by who can tell what outrage on afflicted humanity. While I was showing him the markings on the coin, Captain Bob went into his bedroom and presently came out with an old buckskin glove that jingled as he cast it on the table. It was filled with odd coins in gold and silver, picked up in almost every port the sun shines on; and as we cleaned each one off and passed it, glittering, to the helpless little fellow on the rug before the wood fire, it made my blood thrill to see the light of intelligence come into his eyes. What no words could teach him, the coins did; and upon my honor he found on one the big letter B, and called it out, for of the few things he knew one was that his friend and protector's familiar appellation with his few cronies was "Bob," and his friend had taught him to spell it out, "B-O-B." We laid in a stock of very large-lettered primers for him that very night, and a month ago, when I ate a salt mackerel and a boiled potato with my old skipper, on my way from New Brunswick to New York, a little twisted figure spelled out the morning news to us from the paper, and the old tom-cats blinked at him with wondering eyes over their pans of milk and of boiled liver on the hearth. Of course, this is but a small incident in a large matter, but it came to me to tell it merely to show that the object-lesson provided by this stray coin in my pocket and the forgotten hoard of an old salt was sufficient to stimulate a dormant intelligence into activity. This brutalized victim of unnatural parentage had learned by seeing on the bits of metal what no words could have taught him. Now, Captain Bob assures me, he teaches himself and learns new and useful lessons every day.

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Among American collectors who have done significant work for the advancement of numismatics among us is Dr. Horatio R. Storer, of Newport, R. I. Dr. Storer is not only a collector for the pleasure of collectorship, but an investigator and author whose memorials on his subject have a place of permanent value in numismatic literature. I believe his first published work was a paper in the *New England Medical Journal* for November and December, 1886, on "The Medals, Jetons and Tokens Illustrative

of Midwifery and the Diseases of Women." This he followed in several issues of *The Sanitarian* in 1887 with an essay on "The Medals, Jetons and Tokens Illustrative of Sanitation." The series was continued in 1888, 1889, 1890 and 1891, and is not yet completed. His paper on "The Goethe Medals," suggested by the fact that the great German poet-philosopher was educated as a physician, appeared in the *American Journal of Numismatics* in October, 1887, and January, 1888, and one on "The Medals of Guislain," the Belgian chemist, in the *Medico-Legal Journal* of December, 1887. In January, 1888, and again in October, 1891, he appeared in the *Revue Belge Numismatique* with a paper and continuation on "Les Médailles de la Princesse Charlotte d'Angleterre, Première Femme du Roi Leopold Ier de Belgique," who died in childbirth, and in July and October, 1888, the *American Journal of Numismatics* issued his essay on "The Medals of Saint Charles Borromeo, Cardinal, Archbishop of Milan," who was identified with the Plague of 1576. The same journal began in July, 1888, a series of papers by Dr. Storer on "The Medals, Jetons and Tokens Illustrative of the Science of Medicine," a vast undertaking, which has continued through 1889, 1890 and 1891, and is still to be carried on. His paper on "The Medals of Benjamin Rush, Obstetrician," which was read at the fortieth annual meeting of the American Medical Association, at Newport, R. I., in June, 1889, was printed in the *Journal of the Association* for September 7 of that year. This last paper, and that upon "The Medals, etc., on Midwifery and the Diseases of Women," have been re-issued in pamphlet shape. No one who has not gone through the contributions of Dr. Storer to this department of numismatics upon which he has concentrated his researches can form an even approximate idea of the extent of his investigations, of the richness and interest of the field he is exploring, and of the value of the historical monument he is building up in the true spirit of a labor of love.

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The sale of United States cents which was made by Mr. T. B. Bennell, through Professor Ed. Frossard, on December 22d was a noteworthy success. Over \$1,000 was realized. Mr. Bennell, by the way, has issued the tenth edition of his useful "Pocket Manual and Premium Coin List" for 1892-'93. The brochure is an invaluable handbook for coin buyers—for those who have coins to sell and for collectors who desire a condensed work of reference, and ought to be of great use for business men in all walks through whose hands odd and rare coins are always likely to pass in the way of trade. The descriptive notes and critical remarks are as rich in practical information as the coin lists themselves. The "Manual" may be had for a dime by addressing T. B. Bennell, 304 Broadway, City.

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There will be three picture sales at the Fifth Avenue Auction Rooms for the week commencing January 11th. The more important will be that of the paintings belonging to the late head of the house, Mr. C. F. Wetmore, including his private collection and works upon which he had made advances. The catalogue includes two choice examples of J. Robie and others by A. Moreau, C. Detti, A. Weiss, some American pictures, and a fine canvas which is attributed to Constable. Another group will consist of the estate of James Sloane, of Baltimore, and will present examples of M. F. H. De Haas, James H. Beard, James Hart, J. G. Brown, George H. Boughton, R. C. Woodville, A. H. Wyant, E. Fischel and other artists, native and foreign. A third division is made up of a varied selection of works by American artists. The catalogues are now ready. The week preceding the picture sale the house will have an important distribution of fine modern furniture and superb and high-priced porcelains.

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There are catalogues and catalogues, as everyone who has occasion to handle them must be aware. The average exhibition catalogue is a disgrace, and the average sales catalogue either a farce or a swindle. But there are model catalogues to be had once in awhile, and among these belong two that I have before me.

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One of these is that which was compiled by Mr. Frederick Keppel for the recent exhibition of modern etchings and drawings done by etchers which he got together for the Art Institute of Chicago. This collection, largely made up out of Mr. Keppel's private folios and from the rarer stock of his house, was supplemented and strengthened by some of the matchless proofs from the collections of Mr. Samuel P. Avery and Mr. Howard Mansfield, of this city. While the collection exhibited was predetermined and essentially modern, the keynote was struck for it by a few choice examples of Rembrandt and Van Dyck. But it is

less of the exhibit itself, of whose quality the mere fact that Mr. Keppel fathered it is a sufficient guarantee, than of the catalogue that I wish to speak. This little pamphlet is a real mine of invaluable information, briefly and accurately put. It must be precious to the collector of etchings, for even though he may know all that is in it—which I doubt—he will find it here put in a way that he cannot find ready for reference anywhere else. Mr. Keppel's terse and nervous style goes directly to the point. Like all men who know much about what they write of, he says as much as is necessary for his purpose and no more. His summary biographies of the etchers which introduce the selections from each man's work are gems of brief criticism, and such observations as he makes on individual plates are authoritative definitions of their relative places in the collector's scale of rarity and choice.

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THE other catalogue to which I would refer is that issued by the Grolier Club, of this city, for the curious and interesting exhibition of engraved portraits of the most famous English authors, from Chaucer to Johnson, which the club made last month. This unique exhibition possessed a double interest—in the first place, that inseparable from its subject, and in the second, that inseparable from the special artistic quality of many of the prints shown. This catalogue, like that of Mr. Keppel, has been made a work of positive and valuable record by the simple accuracy of its definitions and statements. It does not contain a word too much for a catalogue, nor one too little to serve as an index by which the collector may seek any more detailed information he may desire at the most accessible source.

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Chicago is scarcely to be congratulated upon having secured Mr. St. Gauden's "Diana," which is to be taken down from the Madison Square Garden tower, as an architectural attraction of the World's Fair. The figure is not a good one. It has no spirit or vitality of construction and is, in fact, merely a stiff effigy in metal. It will probably make a better show for itself in Chicago from the fact that it will not be so absurdly disproportioned to its place as it is here, but nothing will ever make it a great work of art. Mr. St. Gauden is, it is understood, to model a smaller figure for the weathercock on the tower, and in this he will doubtless be more successful. Within its limitations, his talent is capable of very graceful and beautiful work.

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An important event in art matters has just been accomplished in Brooklyn by the transfer of the old Brooklyn Institute property to the Brooklyn Institute of Arts and Sciences. The old institute has been in a moribund condition for a long while, and the new institute was created to revivify it and to continue its work upon a wider and more progressive plan. The new institute was incorporated by act of the Legislature in April, 1890, the Legislature having, in March, 1889, authorized the Mayor and Park Commissioners to lease to the proposed corporation at a nominal rental a site for a museum of arts and sciences and library in the park lands fronting on Flatbush avenue opposite Prospect Park. In 1890 the Legislature authorized Brooklyn to erect the museum building on the Prospect Hill site, at an expense not to exceed \$300,000, as soon as the endowment funds of the new institute exceeded \$200,000, and authorizing the city to lease the building to the institute at a nominal rent. The funds in hand now approximate \$200,000. The libraries and collections of the old institute pass into the possession of the new one. The library numbers 12,500 volumes. The institute building proper will be erected downtown in Brooklyn, but the site has not yet been selected. Among the incorporators of the Brooklyn Institute of Arts and Sciences are Gen. John B. Woodward, President Edwin Beers of the Long Island Loan and Trust Company, President George W. White of the Mechanics' Bank, President John Loughran of the Manufacturers' National Bank, ex-Health Commissioner Andrew Otterson, ex-Postmaster Joseph C. Hendrix, Congressman William J. Coombs, J. S. T. Stranahan, City Works Commissioner John P. Adams, S. M. Meeker, ex-Mayor Frederick A. Schroeder, the Rev. Dr. Charles H. Hall, Dr. Charles E. West, Dr. Albert C. Perkins, Prof. Franklin W. Hooper, State Fish Commissioner Eugene G. Blackford, Dr. Robert Foster, John E. Searles, Jr., Carl H. De Silver, Joseph Fahys, David H. Houghtaling, Alexander E. Orr, R. R. Bowker, Joshua M. Van Cott, Mark Hoyt, James McMahon, William Potts, Henry L. Faris, John Truslow, Frederick A. Guild, Henry E. Pierrepont, Henry L. Palmer, Thomas T. Barr, the Rev. Charles R. Baker, E. H. R. Lyman, Superintendent of Public Instruction William H. Maxwell, Warren H. Sneden, Peter W. Ray, Conrad V. Dykeman, Walter C. Carter, Frank Squier, and William Berri.

Sometimes incidents dovetail themselves very curiously. Last week I had a note from a western subscriber, who has been picture hunting in New York, in which he asked me, "why is it your picture dealers, in so many cases, have two prices?" On the very same day the representative of a foreign house which has opened a gallery here remarked: "Your picture buyers in New York are a funny lot. Just now a gentleman was in here, and he priced that picture there. I gave him our price—\$1,400. He offered me \$1,000. What does such a man take me for? He must think I put on an extra price in order to swindle him." This is an extreme view to take of the matter, but it is not unnatural that a stranger should so look upon it. Some years ago our native painters smashed their own market at the exhibitions by entering their pictures in the catalogues at high figures, for show, and cutting them often as much as fifty per cent on offer. I argued against this false policy at the time and pointed to what it would lead, but nobody paid any attention to the warning. The result was that in a little while no man bought a picture at an exhibition without demanding a heavy discount on the catalogue price, and to this day our artists pay out of their pockets for the vanity of parading themselves at large figures in print. The system is radically wrong, whether it be practiced by artists or by dealers. It produces no result but a general tendency to bargain on the part of buyers, and an inevitable suspicion on their part that they must bargain in order to avoid being imposed upon. The commercial policy of Baxter street should have no place on Broadway or Fifth avenue.

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The house of Boussod, Valadon & Co. has an excellent system of fixed prices in the picture end of its business in this city. I happen to know it through transactions with the house in which I acted as agent for a friend. This gentleman made the house offer on certain pictures, subject to my approval of them, as additions to his collection. His offer was under the house's figures by a small percentage—amounting, on an order for nearly \$50,000 only, to about \$2,000. It was refused. The invoice lists and private, priced catalogue of the house were brought forth. It was politely but firmly explained that no concession was possible, even to a collector whose patronage the house was glad to have. Each picture shipped to it had its invoice value clearly defined. It paid duty on this. Then the duty and the cost of shipment were added to the original price, an additional amount was added to cover interest, etc., and allow a reasonable profit, and the price thus fixed was adhered to. The rule, I was assured, was absolute, and I have reason to believe that it is. Against such a rule there can be no reasonable complaint. It commences by notifying a purchaser of what he must pay. It makes no concealment of the fact that the seller expects to make a profit out of the transaction, and as business is business and no man is supposed to work for nothing, unless he is a pure philanthropist of the rare breed of the Rue Laffitte, with a New York annex, the man who wants to buy is put on an equitable footing with the man who wants to sell, and each may understand and rely upon the other.

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The other day one of my subscribers, who has been idling a year away on the Pacific coast, brought, to show me, a collection he had acquired of the almost incredibly beautiful sea ferns and mosses which are gathered on the southern coast of California. If I had command of the vocabulary necessary to do these masterpieces of nature justice, I would willingly apply it, but like the waxworks of Mrs. Jarley, they must be seen to be appreciated. I own several books of them, but this was a veritable collection; a sort of library in itself. The ferns and mosses are gathered, floated clear of salt in soft water, and given a dainty and tasteful arrangement in scrap-books to whose pages they are lightly gummed. Art never made their like nor ever will. One might even wish to be a dime museum mermaid to wander in the groves of such a paradise as they must wave in. When I was in "the still vexed Bermoothes," I used to go out every day with an old boatman, who could lie and chew tobacco with more real native genius than anyone I ever met in his humble sphere of life, to look at the coral forests under the sapphire waters of the Isles of Bliss. Fathoms deep in the pellucid flood the flashing life of the sea swarmed in countless varieties of form, which wound their sinuous courses amid the forest of stone. The clip of their fins, the palpitation of their gills, sent strings of fairy pearls bubbling up to vanish in the sun; the ripples that marked their movements were strings of gems; and as evening drew on, and the waters darkened, they made wakes of fire among the ghostly mazes of their submarine labyrinth. It was like looking at the primeval world in miniature through a mirror. But all the fixed splendors of the

Bermudan waters are lifeless ones. The coral forests are rigid and dead. Out beyond the great Rockies, the Sierras and the Coast Range, where in midwinter the waves of the Pacific leave a warm kiss on the shore, there are submarine wonders which, like the land they fringe, possess a peculiar exotic splendor. These gardens of the sea-gods are living with a life of their own. The fairies of the great waters plant them there, and transfuse all the riches the great waters swallow up into the pigments with which they dye them. And we get them, dried and pasted into books, and study them with a wonder and delight whose greatest extravagance cannot do justice to their infinite variety, their exquisite daintiness and perfect grace of form, and the wondrous charms of color which lend them the unearthly beauty of the rainbow with even more inflections of tint than the rainbow enjoys.

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Mr. Hermann Wunderlich, the printseller, died suddenly just before Christmas. Mr. Wunderlich, who first became known to our collectors as one of the staff of M. Knoedler & Co., achieved, when he entered business on his own account, a merited reputation as a judge of prints and from his dealings in the higher order of them. His small but attractive gallery at 860 Broadway has been the scene of some of the most original and interesting special exhibitions that have been held in this city. Several which will be recalled with special pleasure were the Whistler exhibitions; that devoted to the etchings of Rembrandt, and the display made of works by the English etcher, William Strang.

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There will be a public sale of a collection of old masters in this city pretty soon, in which genuine connoisseurs will find some good picking. The pictures come from a reputable source, and the collection contains a number of fine examples of the Dutch school of the seventeenth century.

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Mr. Winslow Homer's latest picture, "The Return from the Hunt," has been on exhibition in the galleries of Messrs. Reichard & Co. It is one of the least attractive pictures which the artist has painted—a bit of cold, uncompromising realism, which might have been created as an original for a Currier & Ives lithograph. Every tender quality of nature seems to be frozen out of it, as if it were painted on a bitter cold day in crystallized metallic colors on a chilled steel panel. The type of the huntsman, who carries the pelt of the deer over his shoulder, and its front and antlers in his hand, is low and brutal in the extreme. He is just the sort of scoundrel, this fellow, who hounds deer to death up in the Adirondacks for the couple of dollars the hide and horns bring in, and leaves the carcass to feed the carrion birds. The best thing in the picture is the true doggishness of the hounds. One doesn't expect hounds to have any instinct above slaughter. Throughout, however, the picture—albeit well composed and firmly drawn—is a cold and unsympathetic work, entirely unworthy of the artist, unless he had made it as the original for a newspaper illustration.

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Mr. George W. Childs has added to the gift of his friend, Mr. Drexel, to the city of Philadelphia one peculiarly his own. He has given the Drexel Institute his collection of priceless original manuscripts, of which so much has been written from time to time, and proposes to add to it a selection from his library, which is but little less rich in gems of price. Among the Childs manuscripts which I now remember are those of Thackeray's "Four Georges," of Dickens's "Our Mutual Friend," of Charles Lamb's "Witches and Other Night Fears," from the "Essays of Elia," of Major Andre's satirical poem, "The Cow Chase," of Nathaniel Hawthorne's "Consular Experiences," an original sermon of Cotton Mather; William Cullen Bryant's "First Book of the Iliad," James Russell Lowell's "Under the Willows," James Fenimore Cooper's "Life of Captain Richard Somers," N. P. Willis's "The Need of Two Loves," Harriet Martineau's "Retrospect of Western Travel." The collection is particularly strong in autograph material from distinguished Americans and persons associated with American history.

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Some fifteen years ago, in Paris, I ran across some very odd and very striking books in an out-of-the-way corner of the Palais Royal. They were surrounded by Chinese crockery, nightmare gods and hideous ornaments in porcelain and brass. They consisted of pages of pictures, each two pages being printed on one sheet, and the loose edges bound in, so that you turned two pages at a time. The pictures were printed from wooden blocks, apparently, and represented landscapes, figures, singly and in composition, beasts, flowers—in short, all animate and inanimate nature.

There were books entirely of bugs, of birds, fishes and so on, and some with figure compositions with explanatory lettering in the corners of the pages, evidently telling a story, while the former seemed to be created for purposes of instruction. The drawings of animals and figures were wonderfully graphic, free, and true to nature, but the landscapes were almost Chinese in their perspective. The art in these pictures was, however, something which the Chinese had never dreamed of attaining to. The crude barbarism of the Mongolian draughtsman was nowhere beside these grotesque but wonderfully quaint and charming conceptions. The genius of the artists had fairly run mad in them and turned out such wonders of decorative design, such ingenious yet masterly bits of detail, and such magnificent balance of form, line and color, that they fairly took my breath away. "They are Japanese, Monsieur," said the shopkeeper, as I fluttered them over with an eager hand. "A funny people those Japanese must be. My son tells me they wear shoes with soles a foot high, and saw wood backward. It makes one's blood run cold to hear of such barbarians, does it not, sir?" I told him it did, indeed, and bought a lot of books, there were twenty odd, for less than as many francs. "You are the second customer I have had for these, Monsieur," he said, "since my son brought them home in his ship," and he went on to tell me that his son was a middy on some man-of-war, now off again on a long cruise, whence he had promised to bring something really worth having, "not this trash."

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These were the first Japanese books I ever saw. Some years later, having returned home, I found a few in a down-town store here. The dealer said they had been brought to him on sale by a young clerk in some shipping house, who had doubtless been presented with them by some friendly skipper. Little by little these books began to make their appearance around town. I came across them in studios and on library shelves. They sold for from ten cents to a quarter, and found few buyers, for there were few to understand their value. The Japanese are the first masters of decoration in the world. The simplicity of their methods is their chief charm. They acknowledge, what every real artist must, that nature is the only real school; and they find in nature every inspiration for an art which no criticism can disparage; an art as honest and as pure as that which teaches the lark its carol and gives the rose its bloom. Every picture in these painted books of theirs tells its story clearly, and with a fascinating simplicity which touches the heart. I never take one of these little brochures up but I see with my mind's eye comical little Japanese babies learning their first lessons out of them. Happy is the nation which has such primers to make knowledge palatable. I don't know that I have any wisdom to boast of now, but I would have some. I'll be sworn, if my first lessons had been taught me through the medium which is at hand for the brat of every cango bearer of the Land of the Rising Sun, though he feeds on fish and beans the year round, and lives in a kennel such as a dog would turn his civilized nose up at and his pampered tail to.

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Japanese art in this country got its first boom through the Centennial Exhibition, where the Empire was represented in a most creditable way. But it did not become fashionable here till Paris took it up. That event was brought about by the Exposition of 1878. Paris went mad over the Japanese display there, and since that time the craze has grown to the proportions a popular craze always assumes. We had hundreds of curio stores in America as soon as we found out that they were fashionable in Paris. Now there are even sidewalk dealers in Japanese wares. No parlor is complete without them; they are as essential to the present-day household as the brush and comb and the looking-glass. At first local firms dealt in Japanese goods. Now there are extensive establishments run by native Japanese, and bright, smart business men they are, too, these queer, wiry little fellows, with their rat eyes and their perpetual sardonic smiles, all over New York. Most of these native establishments possess splendid stocks. They are high-priced sometimes, but they are honest. But unless you are a connoisseur avoid the Hebraic jobbers. You may find some stuff worth having in their stores, but they hold such a heap of rubbish that it takes a man who knows what he is about to buy what is worth buying. I do not speak of the cheap things, for no one can go astray on them. If a cheap vase or pot is pretty, or strikes your fancy, it is always worth its price. But when it comes to dollars instead of cents caution becomes a virtue. It is much more easy to throw away a hundred or two on bric-à-brac than to invest it sensibly. I hold that even in buying luxuries of ornament no man can afford to make a fool of himself. He might as well buy something with an intrinsic value



while he is about it, and to do it he had better go to the best places and pay the best prices. The men you read of as picking up old masters and Cellini carvings in junk-shops are single men out of thousands who look contemptuously at those same treasures, and pass them by for sharper and wiser eyes to dwell on and appreciate.

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There are fewer downright frauds in Japanese curios than would be thought from the extent of the business, however. That is, there are fewer bogus curios put on the market. The reason for this simply is that they cannot be manufactured in Europe or here to compete in original cost with the products of low-priced native labor. The experiment was tried in Paris and was an almost utter failure. Some fans and panels are made over there, the chief designer of them being Felix Régamey, who visited this country some years back and figured occasionally in the pages of Frank Leslie's and the Harper's publications. In the main, however, the curios are genuine Japanese as far as their origin is concerned. But a vast bulk of them are of the lowest grade of native art, turned out to sell, slighted and botched in any way so long as they are finished. The immense demand for curios has taxed the producing powers of the Japanese artists to their uttermost, and hundreds of incompetent hands are now employed on work they would not have been permitted to touch a few years back. The production of lacquer-ware in particular—an industry in which the empire took great pride—has run down fearfully. It takes an expert now to pick out lacquer worth the money. So grievous has this deterioration become that the Mikado has several times had a commissioner at work investigating it, and there is talk of attempting to reform it by legislation. The chief bogus Japanese stuff foisted on the public here is in the form of porcelain and lacquer-ware. But this is all cheap stuff, and it ruins no one to be cheated by it. It is in buying fifth-rate lacquer, pottery, bronze and so on at first rate prices that the public suffers, and the smaller stores are the pitfalls which snare the unwary buyer. Let him work the big shops and he will be safe enough. The worst that can be said of them is that they have no conscience in the matter of prices. They charge for rarities and fine ware, not what would be justified by their original cost, but what they think they can get. So they may have ten prices for as many different customers. Since Mr. Thomas B. Clarke opened his Art House in Thirty-fourth street, however, the sharks of the trade have filed their teeth a trifle. Mr. Clarke's system of setting a price on a basis of first cost and adhering to it, has seriously disturbed the speculative system of the trade at large.

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Apropos of Mr. Clarke's establishment, it should be of interest for the collector to learn that he has now a small but choice cabinet of some of the finest jades that have ever been offered for sale in New York.

### THE BONAVENTURE CATALOGUES

MR. E. F. BONAVENTURE has just issued a catalogue of some two hundred numbers of Standard, Desirable and Popular Books, in various departments of English literature, including a selection of illustrated works and some Napoleonic and Washington prints. He announces also as ready for distribution a catalogue of etchings and engravings, portraits, and sets for extra-illustrating; and a catalogue of rare books, free on application; and as in preparation, and appearing February 1st, 1892, a catalogue of general French literature: also a catalogue of books of the highest rarity, containing ten fac-similes of bindings, some from the last Paris Exhibition, which latter may be had for 10 cents by addressing the publisher at 45 and 47 West 31st street.

Since his latest trip to Europe, Mr. Bonaventure has largely augmented his stock of medieval manuscripts, illuminated in gold and colors; vellum printed and illuminated Hours, by Kerver, Pigouchet, Vostre and others; historical bindings of the highest interest, from royal libraries and of the provenance illustre; incunables and black letters; first editions, Aldines and Elzevirs; art galleries; volumes of rarity, encased in bindings of Trautz-Bauzonnet, Chambolle-Duru, Marius Michel, Lortic, Bedford, and the most famous binders; eighteenth century French illustrated works; English belles lettres and all branches of literature; works illustrated by Cruikshank, Rowlandson, Leech, etc.; rare Americana; mezzotints, line engravings in rare states, and proofs of all kinds; portraits, sets of plates, views, etc., for extra-illustrative purposes. Mr. Bonaventure gives his personal attention to orders on book sales in New York, Paris, London, etc., using for his patrons the same discrimination as in buying for himself, and catalogues and prepares libraries, print collections, etc., for auction sale as well as cataloguing and appraising libraries for private use.

### BABBLE OF THE BOULEVARD

(Special Correspondence of THE COLLECTOR.)

THE auction sales at the famous Hôtel Drouot are again in full swing, and books, paintings and engravings are being sold at a rate rapid enough to completely distance anyone who might even desire to keep a passing record of them. The disposal of the library and effects of Auguste Vitu, late dramatic critic of the *Figaro*, of Adrien Marie the artist, and of other celebrities, have served to claim the attention and presence of that motley class always to be found in the great auction rooms. Exhibitions at the picture galleries are also looking up. One of the best is that at the Petit Gallery, where are on view a number of drawings designed to illustrate the works of Hugo. Besides these we find paintings and pastels by Edouard Toudouze, Paul Avril, Bayard, Bourgeois, Benjamin-Constant, F. Flameng, Gérôme, Gervex, Jules Garnier, Leloir, Ad. Leleux and Henner. In the Galleries of the Rue Laffitte, better known, perhaps, as the Durand Ruel, are at present to be seen over forty paintings from the atelier of Charles Jacque. They consist principally in a number of hitherto unfinished canvases upon which the old artist recently determined to add the finishing touch. Jacque is now over 70, but his work bears the stamp of all its pristine vigor. It is unnecessary to describe the subjects of the majority of the pictures; the shepherd and his flock, the shaggy dog or the draught horses drawn up at the farm gate are always there. Some black and white sketches complete this exceptionally good show.

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The Museum of Antiquities in the Louvre has received a valuable addition in the shape of a quantity of ancient glass and terra cotta ware contributed by Dr. Fouquet, a French resident in Egypt. The collection contains some matchless specimens of antique Egyptian and Alexandrine art and of Arab workmanship in the Middle Ages.

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Monsieur Chauchard has just purchased Corot's picture "La Charrette," which was on view at the Exposition of 1889, and was considered by some the finest work of the Barbizon master. N. B.—The Magasins du Louvre have now in stock some of those extremely popular Russian bear tippets, such as are worn in cold weather by the Czarina herself. Umbrellas, fans, muffs, corsets, etc., also in great abundance. If enough of these are sold during the next few months, Monsieur C., who has still an interest in the concern, will, it is confidently assumed, be enabled to buy another Corot or a Diaz or a Millet; it makes little difference. Monsieur C.'s agent and buyer informs me that "La Charrette" measures 18x24 inches, making 432 square inches of canvas. It is valued at 300 francs the square inch, exclusive of the frame, which is worth more.

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When I first heard the harmonious voice of Mme. Anna Judic some years ago, though long after she had graduated from the cafés chantants, I do not believe that the thought of disposing by public sale of the contents of her jewel box or the ornaments of her boudoir in the Rue Nouvelle ever entered her head. Whether she has made unfortunate investments with the money that at one time came to her in uninterrupted abundance, or whether she has lost her charm over the boulevardiers, I know not. Certain it is, however, that on the 12th day of this month the greater portion of her furniture, jewelry, bronzes, paintings, antiques—in fact, a huge collection of household decorations, comprising a little of everything imaginable, was knocked down to the highest bidder. Sic transit gloria demi-mundi! But happily for the erstwhile favorite, nearly every object put up was hotly contested by those amid the gathering that assembled early in the afternoon. There were a number of exquisite little Louis XVIII ivory miniatures, antique silverware, Louis XIV fans, and Venetian and Brussels lace. After these there were offered a score or more of water colors and designs from the brush and pencils of Berne-Bellecour, Bourgoin, Caran d'Ache, Detaille, Duez, Grévin (who, by the bye, always designed the chanteuse's costumes), Madeleine Lemaire, Adrien Marie and others. Paintings in oil by Corot, Diaz, Ch. Jacque, Ribot, Giron and Tissot went at good figures, while some bits of Tanagra, Chinese and Oriental porcelaines, enamel and cloisonnés shared their good fortune. A harp having belonged to Louis XVI, some ancient Aubusson tapestries, silks, stained glass, etc., brought all that they were worth, and more, too. In short, the little Parisienne is to be congratulated; and were I to learn a few months hence that she was engaged in forming a new collection, I should be in no wise astonished.

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For the comparatively moderate sum of ten or fifteen louis d'or it is possible to edit, publish and circulate in the city of Paris 1,000 to 1,500 copies of a brand new literary review; and with these facts in sight it is not difficult to account for their frequent, if ephemeral, appearance in the windows of the kiosques along the boulevards. As soon as the first breath of autumn drives pleasure seekers back from Trouville, Biarritz and Luchon, the literary reviews begin to appear. We have the *Revue de la Semaine*, *La Petite Revue*, *Revue Bleue*, *Verte*, *Jaune*, etc. No sooner is one of these fly-by-nights born than the